

# How Not to Be a Pug

by [Taki Theodoracopulos](#) 

June 21, 2014

[Multiple Pages](#)



photo credit: Shutterstock

Kristin Scott Thomas

As everyone who has ever joined a club knows, Pugs is the world's most exclusive one, its 19 members varying from German nobility and Greek and Danish royalty to the British upper classes, Indian nobility, and American and Greek aristocracy. Plus Sir Bob Geldof and Roger Taylor, of pop music royalty. Club rules forbid membership to exceed 21, hence a titanic struggle is taking place as I write to fill our last two spots.

Last week in London the annual Pugs lunch took place and I flew over for it from New York despite running a temperature and suffering from the flu. Mind you, it was worth it. Everyone wore the sky blue and white striped necktie of the club, evoking a gentler time when men wore uniforms and marched in step. At one head of the table sat Sir Christopher Lee, our oldest member, who at age 92 has two films and three recordings out this year alone. At the other end were Sir Bob Geldof and club commodore Tim Hoare. I sat between Count Leopold Bismarck and Prince Nikolaos of Greece, who had flown in from the birthplace of electrolysis especially for the meeting. His older brother, Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece, opened the proceedings by suggesting we leave the voting for new members part for last—the prince is a very nice man who does not like blackballing people—but his suggestion was unanimously rejected. Even before the first course, but after numerous bottles of wine had been consumed, we dealt with a plethora of proposals for membership, a most pleasant business.

“Basically, I will become engaged to Kristin later on this year, and by that time I hope to have met her.”

For starters, Charles Saatchi received 19 blackballs out of nineteen, which means his name can never come up again. Following was Edward St Aubyn, who received 22 blackballs, which according to club rules needed an open explanation. I was the one that had to stand and explain why there were more blackballs than members voting. The reason was that St Aubyn had blackened his father's name by writing that his old man had buggered him silly, all in order to exorcize his demons and gain fame and fortune, and patricide is a real no-no among Pugs members.

So there was a second vote on St Aubyn and this time he got twenty-five blackballs.

After him Jay Zee, or Jay-Z, the rapper billionaire, also received more blackballs than we are members, so the president himself, Nick Scott, aka Professor Gimlet, explained that while the rapper was being kicked and beaten by his sister-in-law for no particular reason except for cheating on her sister, the rapper did not react in a typical rapper manner by punching her in the mouth and calling her a bitch. Not acting like a rapper when one has made a billion as a rapper deserves a blackball and a half, hence the result.

After that particularly nice interlude, lunch was served and then once again we had to vote, this time for the Pugs' dream date. But before nominations were heard, Prince Heinrich von Fürstenberg warned members that Arpad Busson's dalliance with one of the Kardashian women could bring the club's impeccable name and ranking into disrepute. Busson strenuously denied any contact, but the more he denied it, the less he was believed by his fellow Pugs. The dream girl we finally agreed on for 2014 was Kristin Scott Thomas, although in the secret ballot there was one vote for a Kardashian, the handwriting being rather familiar to me as that of Arpad Busson, with the same misspellings. (Mine vot ees fer ...) But it could have been a jokester among us trying to blacken a poor Swiss boy's chances with Kristin.

What goodies come with being the dream date of Pugs Club? Quite a lot actually. A weekend on George Livanos' private Greek island. An indefinite stay at Chalet Palataki in Gstaad. A weekend of hunting in England's greatest shoot, Gunnerside, gracefully offered by the owner, Bob Miller, another member. A cruise on Mark Getty's magnificent clipper bowed yacht, Talitha; ditto a cruise on Mark's half brother Tara Getty's boat, Tara being the most recent member elected to Pugs. Commodore Hoare also has offered his beautiful sailing boat,

but she is for the moment unavailable as she is being repaired. (Plus ça change.) I could go on. Basically, I will become engaged to Kristin later on this year, and by that time I hope to have met her. Count Bismarck has promised a ball following the engagement and Sir Christopher Lee will read the lesson. Everything will be hunky-dory.

Now for the bad news: for the Saudis, that is. More than 40 years ago I remember gambling against a Saudi called Fahd who had a beautiful Palestinian girl next to him and whom he introduced as his wife as he sat down at the chemmy table. It was at John Aspinall's old Clermont Club in Berkeley Square. I remember it as if it were yesterday, because in a very high stakes game I got an eight to Fahd's nine. His wife sympathized with me as I was young and obviously in over my head. Aspers applauded, as Fahd had unlimited funds and suckers like me were needed to butter him up. I went to the loo and threw up. Now I read Fahd's son is refusing to honor his father's promises to the beautiful Palestinian who is now 65 and still beautiful. So what else is new? If she needs a witness I am ready to testify. But as I am engaged to Ms. Scott Thomas I will demand nothing in return. Fahd's wife's name is Janan Harb. I hope justice is served.

At Easter 1215, a young Tuscan married woman innocently flirted in public with a man not her husband. He flirted back just as innocently, and then things got out of hand. A vendetta was declared between Guelf and Gibel, two rival brothers of Pistoia, that resulted in extreme violence, the splitting of Guelf factions into Whites and Blacks with ensuing massacres, 1,400 houses in the middle of Florence burnt, and a feud that brought out every long-simmering antagonism from politics, to money, to envy which lasted far longer than if the flirtation had not been as innocent as it was.

Guelfs and Ghibellines came to mind as the historian walked into my chalet accompanied by our chairman Andrew Neil, and two other beauties, Charlotte and Naomi. But I had eyes only for Lisa, with love being too weak a word to describe how I felt the moment I laid eyes on her. One thing is for sure. If Andrew Roberts lays a hand on her during the next five years I will squash him like a gnat, or better yet shorten him by a foot or two with an 'empi' (elbow strike) which will cut him down to Napoleonic size. (Andrew is writing an opus on Napoleon, and Lisa, author of a biography of Madame de Montespan among others, is assisting him.)

Gstaad is now starting 'la grande saison', which means those who passionately believe that money is the cornerstone of life have arrived to enjoy après skiing. This year we've had the best snow conditions in 50 years, not that we did much skiing over the weekend. It all went quickly, mind you, a blur of alcoholic haze and 'glibido' — all talk and no action. What impressed my guests the most were the women around here. They had faces they can afford. We lost Charlotte after the first evening to a...lemon, and Lisa after the second night to her hubby, a composer. But Naomi stuck it out till the bitter end, as did the chairman. I have taken to my bed to recover, hoping to start skiing again some time next March.

But, before that, news of Pug's, the world's most exclusive club. As everyone knows, Pug's main business is the blackball. And I am very pleased to report that never have there been more people blackballed than this year, which is only six weeks old. I have already listed some of the bold-faced names blackballed by members who should have known better than to propose them. People like Elton John, Paul McCartney, Henry Kravis, Salman Rushdie, Bernie Madoff (long before he was proved a crook and a depraved blood-sucker), Jeffrey Epstein (friend of Prince Andrew now doing time in a Palm Beach jail for employing underage prostitutes), Dick Cheney, Peter Mandelson, Oleg Deripaska, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Bernie Ecclestone, Geordie Greig, Hugh Grant and others less known but with deeper pockets.

The most embarrassing moment came when Trevor Phillips, head of race relations, was put up and a member white-balled him.

The first volume of the history of Pug's is now out, written and illustrated by Professor Gimlet, one third of the troika of Count Leopold Bismarck and yours truly who founded the club off Porto Heli in the summer of 2006. The fourth Pug was Timothy James Douro Hoare, and it's been uphill — or downstream — ever since. At a memorable AGM in St Moritz in the spring of 2007, and in the absence of anything of substance, three new Pugs were elected: HRH Prince Pavlos of Greece, Prince Heinrich von Fürstenberg and Arpad Busson. There followed HH The Maharaja of Jodhpur, Christopher Lee CBE (the member we're most proud of, England's most successful-ever-movie star, with five films to his credit this year alone, and a man who at the age of 86 wears his Pug's club tie everywhere, even in bed, according to his wife of 48 years), Sir Bob Geldof and Edward Hutley. In 2008 George Livanos, Bob Miller and Roger Taylor completed the club's membership at 14. At present, Lord Rayleigh, the milk tycoon and Leopold Bismarck's brother-in-law, is up for election by the committee which is composed of Taki Theodoracopulos (sometime president), Professor Gimlet (acting president), Count Bismarck and George Livanos (president of the wine committee).

A fine label was donated to the club by Bob Geldof for Pug's wine, the label bearing the words 'Château le Pug, lift a leg with us'. Princess Marie-Chantal of Greece donated the ties, white with a diagonal blue stripe and a small pug at the end. The midnight rule came into effect as of 1 January 2009, and it is the following. Any candidate being proposed after midnight to be withdrawn from the candidates book, incurring a fine of one thousand round English pounds to the proposer. Too many of the members get legless and propose people totally unsuitable for Pug's — money lenders, hedge fund managers, high-class pimps, politicians, recent members of the House of Lords, Cypriot shipowners, and one even had the gall to propose the buffoon Muamar Qaddafi.

Some time next week I have to get out of bed and travel to St Moritz for another AGM. But my mind is not with the club. I am thinking of what Andrew Roberts might be up to, and for the first time in my life I am worried. Ah, the delusion of love, the whisper of a sweet unending yes.